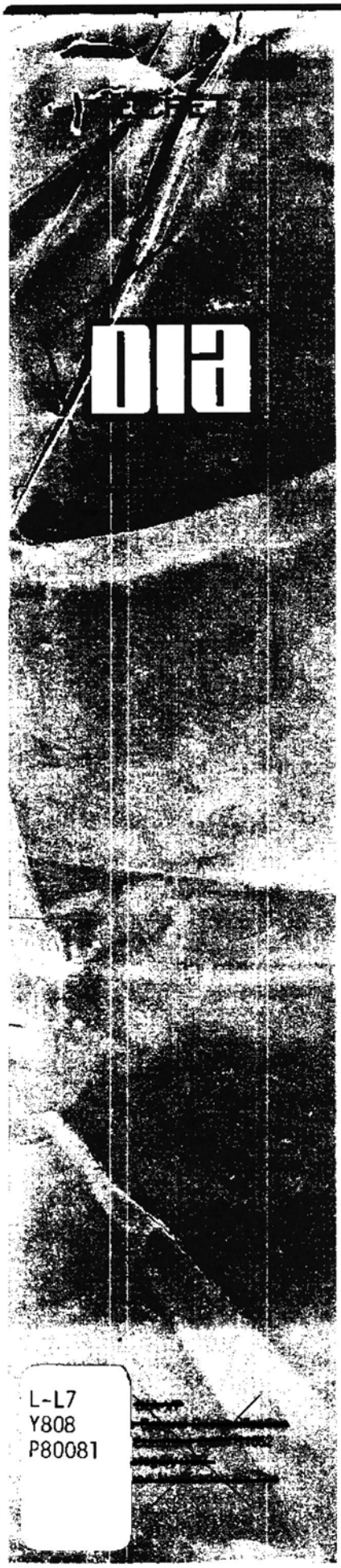

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INTELLIGENCE APPRAISAL

SOUTH AMERICA:

TRENDS IN TERRORISM(U)

30 JANUARY 1978

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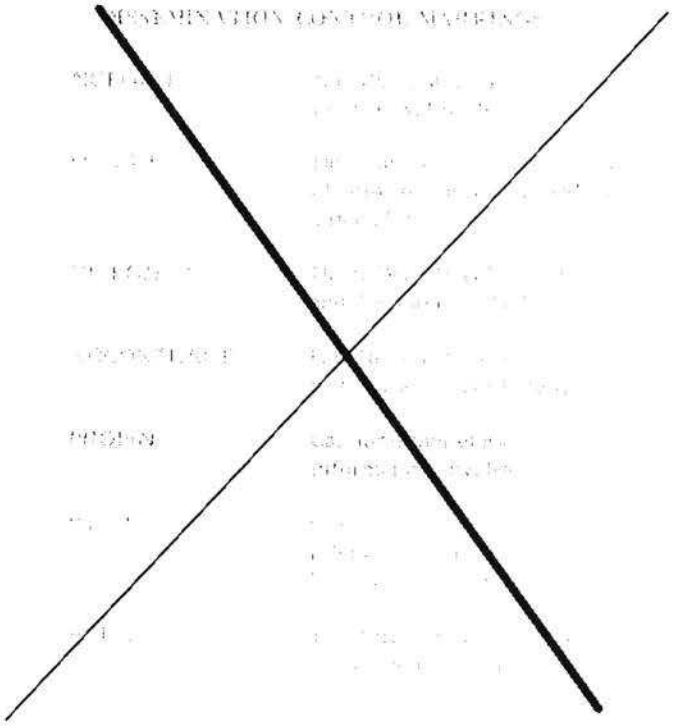

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SOUTH AMERICA:
TRENDS IN TERRORISM (U)

SOUTH AMERICA

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PRINCIPAL ARGENTINE TERRORIST GROUPS

Montoneros

This urban-oriented, internationally based organization originally espoused ultra-Catholic and Peronist ideologies and later became more Marxist-Leninist. It is anti-Argentine Military Government and Armed Forces, and anti-US Government. Its goals include national liberation through armed struggle and establishment of a socialist government. (U)

Peoples Revolutionary Army (ERP)

Also urban oriented and internationally based, the ERP is the military arm of the outlawed Marxist-Leninist Revolutionary Workers Party. Its objectives are to provoke the government through terrorism into becoming so repressive that it will eventually be overthrown by a popular uprising led by the working class and to eliminate capitalist imperialism in Argentina. (U)

Revolutionary Coordinating Junta (JCR)

The JCR, formally established in Argentina in 1974, is the largest known federation of Latin American left-wing terrorist organizations. Its main purpose is to coordinate activities and provide logistical support to its member groups. The JCR is fundamentally a strategic organization that concentrates on solidarity, ties among affiliated groups, and finances. ~~(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)~~

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SOUTH AMERICA: TRENDS IN TERRORISM (U)

SUMMARY

~~(C)~~ Although terrorism in South America has been significantly reduced during the past decade, a considerable threat remains in Argentina, Colombia, and Venezuela. While this threat is mainly directed against the governments and their institutions by indigenous terrorist groups, US citizens and installations on the continent have also been included as targets. Such forays into international terrorism are usually rationalized as an attempt to embarrass or discredit the host government or security forces or as an attack on "Yankee Imperialism" and its symbols.

~~(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)~~ Major factors affecting future terrorism in South America are the degree of outside support provided to and the extent of cooperation among the terrorist organizations. In the past, some terrorist groups have cooperated, and certain countries -- mainly Cuba -- have provided external support. However, a recently formed (1974) organization, the Argentine-born Revolutionary Coordinating Junta (JCR), may strengthen ties and improve support. It stresses solidarity of Latin American guerrilla and terrorist movements and encourages close ties.

~~(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)~~ In 1976, JCR activities were reduced drastically, owing to government security operations that captured, killed, or forced into exile most of its leading figures. Recent reports, however, indicate that the JCR may be attempting to increase its influence on guerrilla and terrorist activities in selected Latin American countries. The extent to which the JCR can coordinate activities, provide external support, and select likely target countries will greatly affect the future trend of terrorist activity in South America.

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DISCUSSION

ARGENTINA

Background

~~(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)~~ One of the most crucial urban terrorist campaigns in South America was fought in Argentina. The Peoples Revolutionary Army (ERP) and the Montoneros, the two leading groups in Argentina, were once the most active and effective terrorist groups in the Western Hemisphere. Between July 1974 -- when Juan Peron died -- and early 1976, Argentina became the scene of one of the most intense, systematic terrorist campaigns in South America. The ERP and the Montoneros, representing the violent left, were arrayed against the Argentine security forces and the rightist action squads -- principally the Argentine Anti-communist Alliance. The terrorists were well trained, well equipped, and well financed. The government was unable to contain them, and that inability largely contributed to the military takeover in March 1976.

(U) The daring and free-wheeling style of the two groups in bank-robbing and kidnaping operations set many precedents. An excellent case in point was the Born brothers' kidnaping on 19 Sep 74, one of the most lucrative ransoming operations ever conducted. Jorge and Juan Born were members of an extremely wealthy family that is associated with the multinational conglomerate of Bunge and Born. For several months, the Montoneros painstakingly collected information about the habits and movement patterns of the brothers and laid indepth, innovative plans. Thirty Montoneros formed five teams for the operation. While one team blocked the main thoroughfare to isolate the Born brothers' limousine, other teams faked an accident between a pickup truck and the limousine. Montoneros disguised as uniformed policemen arrested the brothers and escaped unmolested with their victims. Subsequently, the Montoneros demanded a $60 million ransom in cash and another $1 million in goods, to be distributed to specified groups in Argentina. Several months later, the ransom demands were met to the satisfaction of the Montoneros and the Born brothers were released uninjured.

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~~(S/NOFORN)~~ In addition to being well financed, the terrorist groups maintained a network of weapons factories capable of producing or assembling various weapons, including locally developed grenade launchers and explosive devices. One such device particularly favored by Argentine terrorists is the remotely detonated bomb. During February 1977, the ERP used such a bomb to try to assassinate President Videla and high-ranking Cabinet members. The bomb was placed in a culvert under the runway of the Buenos Aires Municipal Airport and detonated as the Presidential plane was taking off. Only the runway was damaged.

~~(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)~~ After the fall of the Peron government, security measures were stepped up, and the stern measures instituted by the military and security forces led to the decline of these terrorist groups. During 1976 and early 1977, most of the leaders of both the ERP and the Montoneros were killed, captured, or forced into exile. Many of the weapons factories and storage areas were eliminated. Although the capabilities of the Montoneros have been significantly reduced, about 1,000 members are still dispersed throughout the country. Major concentrations are in Buenos Aires, La Plata, and the surrounding provinces. Mario E. Firmenich, leader of the Montoneros, is in exile in Europe.

~~(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)~~ The ERP has nearly been destroyed. Only an estimated 100 members remain, about half of whom are in the ERP's "Guevarist Youth" auxiliary. The death of Mario Santucho in June 1976 was a severe blow to the ERP, depriving the organization of its most imaginative and dynamic leader. Santucho's death and the losses suffered by the ERP also greatly affected the Revolutionary Coordinating Junta (JCR). Santucho was the prime mover behind the JCR, and the ERP was its most active member, initially providing most of the funds and logistical support.

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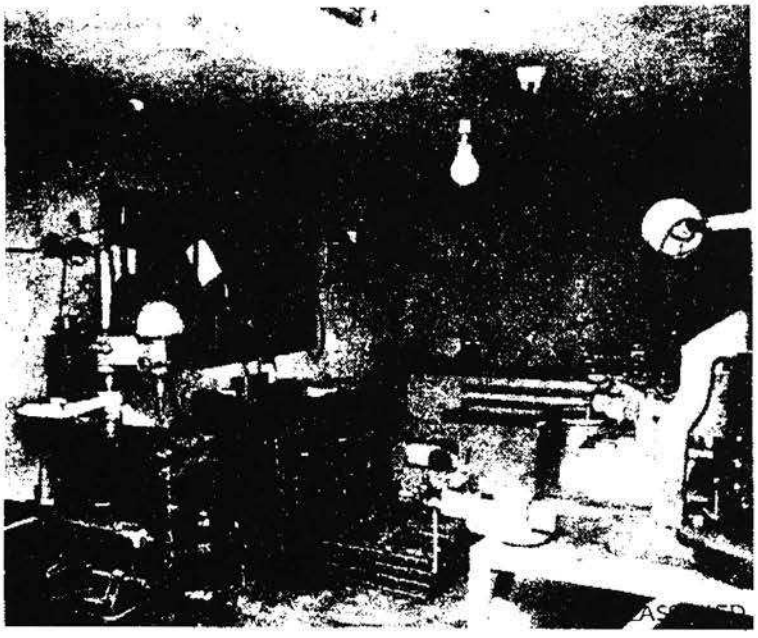
TERRORIST WEAPON FACTORY IN ARGENTINA



WITH UNASSEMBLED MACHINE GUN BARRELS

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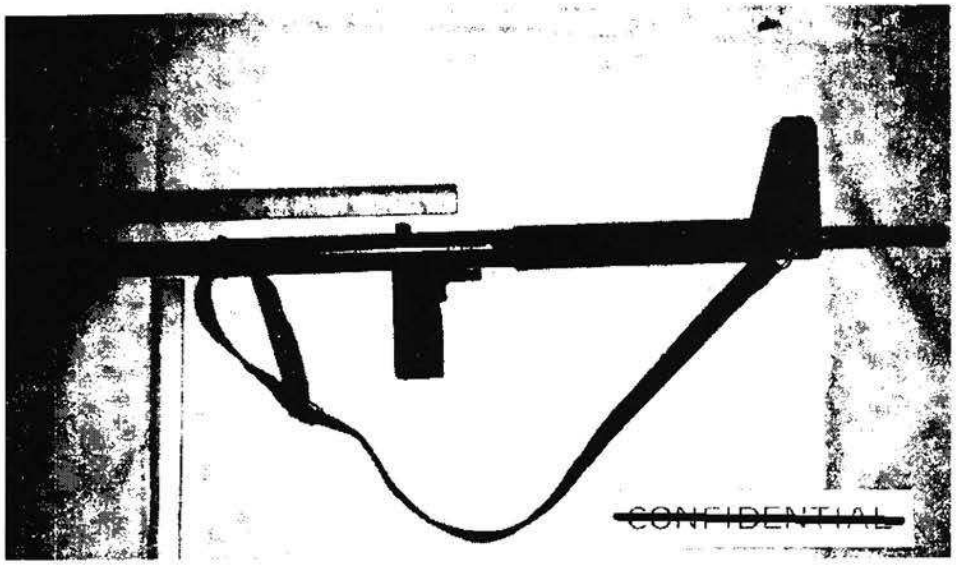
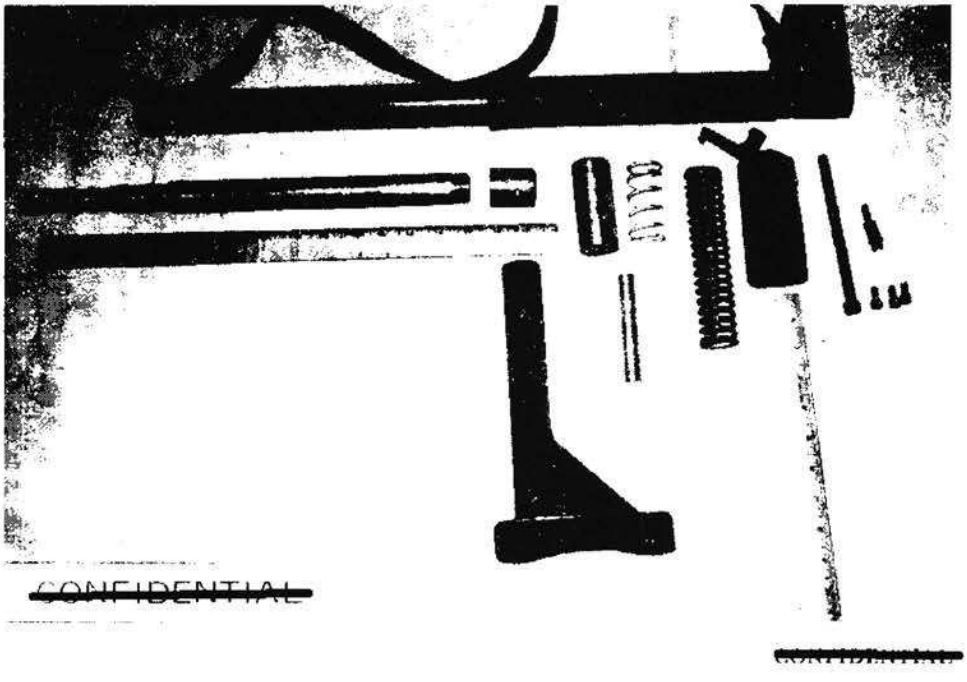
ARGENTINE TERRORIST GRENADE LAUNCHER
IS LOCALLY DEVELOPED AND PRODUCED





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MARIO E. FIRMENICH, LEADER OF THE MONTONEROS

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Terrorist Threat Assessed

~~(C)~~ Since February 1977, terrorist activity in Argentina has decreased significantly; however, terrorist groups still pose a threat. The terrorists can still conduct low-risk operations -- such as bombings, kidnapings, and assassinations -- particularly against unprotected targets.

~~(C)~~ Recent terrorist activities are mainly directed against Argentine officials, security forces, and business executives. While US citizens have been targeted in the past, such actions have noticeably declined. The terrorists possibly consider attacks on US citizens to be counterproductive, in view of the US position on human rights. Recently discovered Montoneros plans, however, indicate a decentralization of authority, with local-level decisionmaking and free targeting by platoons of four to five persons. This freedom in target selection could increase the threat to US citizens, since small, decentralized cells are less likely to consider broader political ramifications before choosing a local target.

~~(S)~~ Montonero planning calls for a higher priority in activities against business executives and continued actions against Argentine officials and security forces. It also advocates an increased emphasis on propaganda and political action within the factories and labor unions. This campaign is in keeping with the Montoneros' desire to rebuild and broaden its support base by appealing to the Peronists who are well established in the labor movement. During April and October 1977, exiled Montoneros announced the creation of the Peronist Montonero Movement and called for opposition forces to join in a Front of National Liberation. This movement is probably just another name for the Montoneros with the prospect of a wider appeal.

~~(C)~~ While the pressure of government security forces has kept the terrorists disorganized, the Montoneros have become more sophisticated in bombing attacks, using radio-controlled, coded sending and receiving devices to activate firing mechanisms. The coded procedure prevents electronic scanners

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from detecting the frequency of the detonating device. This method of detonation and improved plastique explosives -- reportedly made in small workshops -- is far superior to previous bombs. Recently a plastique bomb was found in the Ministry of Labor and had to be detonated because the radio-controlled firing device could not be disarmed.

PRINCIPAL COLOMBIAN TERRORIST GROUPS

19th of April Movement (M-19)

The M-19 is a shadowy, dedicated, and fanatically motivated organization with a nonspecific but pro-Cuban ideology that combines elements of Maoist and Guevarist revolutionary warfare doctrine. It is extremely anti-US and anti-Colombian oligarchy. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~

National Liberation Army (ELN)

A far-leftist terrorist and guerrilla organization with a Castroite ideology, the ELN is anti-Colombian and anti-US Governments. During 1975 and 1976, the ELN was fairly active in rural and urban terrorism. In mid-1976, it split into two factions. (U)

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)

The FARC is a Marxist-Leninist guerrilla and terrorist organization. It is dedicated to the violent overthrow of the established order in Colombia. Since January 1975, FARC has carried out several kidnapings of industrialists, ranchers, and foreigners, including US citizens. ~~(C)~~

Peoples Liberation Army (EPL) (AKA-Popular Liberation Army)

Far-leftist and pro-Chinese, the EPL is the guerrilla arm of the Communist Party of Colombia/Marxist-Leninist. Its objectives are to communize the peasantry and indoctrinate it with the necessity for armed revolt. The EPL is also known as the Popular Liberation Army. (U)

Pedro Leon Arboleda Command (PLA)

A far-leftist, pro-Chinese urban guerrilla and terrorist group, the PLA is composed of workers, students, peasants, and some politicians. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~

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COLOMBIA

Background

~~(S/WNINTEL/NOCONTRACT)~~ In Colombia, terrorist groups have emerged considerably stronger in the past two years than those in many neighboring South American countries. The 19th of April Movement (M-19) has undergone steady growth during the past year and one-half, reaching an estimated strength of 250 members, and has become one of Colombia's most dangerous and effective urban terrorist groups. It took its name from the date of the election defeat in 1970 of former dictator General Rojas de Pinilla. The National Liberation Army (ELN), although somewhat weakened during the past year as a result of factionalism and the arrest of several of its top members, remains active. An estimated 100 terrorists are still at large.

~~(S/WNINTEL/NOCONTRACT)~~ The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) is by far the largest guerrilla organization operating in Colombia, having about 1,500 members. Most of these are in strongholds scattered throughout various remote parts of the country; however, recent emphasis has included augmentation of the group's urban terrorist unit in Bogota -- now approximately 100 strong -- and the establishment of an urban terrorist unit in Medellin. The FARC has been holding a US Peace Corp volunteer for ransom since February 1977.

~~(S/WNINTEL/NOCONTRACT)~~ Two smaller terrorist groups in Colombia are the Peoples Liberation Army (EPL), also known as the Popular Liberation Army, and a splinter faction called the Pedro Leon Arboleda Command (PLA). Since late 1976, the EPL has been fairly quiet; however, the PLA has achieved some success in staging hit-and-run operations against unprotected targets.

~~(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)~~ Despite some setbacks for the Colombian terrorist groups, their kidnapings, bombings, and assassinations have continued. One month after several ELN members were captured in February 1977, the ELN kidnaped Italian banker Giuseppe Mondini in Bogota. He was released

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last June for a reported $85,000 ransom. Since then, the ELN has conducted more bombings, assassinations, and kidnapings. Two kidnapings reportedly attributed to the ELN during October 1977 involved a West German executive of a coffee exporting company and a wealthy Colombian industrialist.

~~(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)~~ The FARC and M-19 have also continued their terrorist activities. The M-19 has been more ruthless and selective in choosing its targets. Last August, M-19 announced it would try former Colombian Agriculture Minister Hugo Ferreira Neira for alleged "persecution and oppression of workers." It claimed responsibility for kidnaping Ferreira, head of an agriculture company that is having labor problems. The M-19 made the same charges against Jose Mercado, a Colombian labor leader, kidnaped and later killed in early 1976.

~~(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)~~ Although Colombian terrorist groups have directed their activities primarily toward Colombian officials and businessmen, a significant number of foreign officials and business representatives -- including US citizens -- have also been targeted. As a result of the arrest of ELN members in February 1977, police discovered specific plans to assassinate two US Government employees at the Inter-American Geodetic Survey in Bogota. Also during 1977, bombings occurred at US-owned stores in Bogota and Cali.

~~(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)~~ External support to and cooperation among Colombian terrorist groups have been sporadic. Colombian terrorist groups have generally operated independently and in an atmosphere of ideological and tactical differences. Indeed, some even had violent confrontations, such as that between the FARC and the PLA. Recent information, however, indicates the possibility of greater cooperation and more outside assistance. A usually reliable source reported that in June 1977, a leading member of the Chilean Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) met with FARC members in Bogota to discuss future collaboration between the two groups.

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MIR is a charter member of the Revolutionary Coordinating Junta (JCR) and the FARC is a nonvoting member. The MIR member had also met with terrorist groups in other countries and offered to put FARC in touch with those groups, particularly the Montoneros of Argentina.

(b)(1);Sec. 3.3(b) (1)

~~(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)~~ [redacted] meetings between Colombian terrorist groups, and M-19 may be the driving force behind a greater effort toward unity. In January 1977, an M-19 strategy paper reportedly called for greater unity among revolutionary forces -- both urban and rural warfare -- and for a "Continental War." Reports of M-19 and ELN cooperation and possible merger, along with alleged ELN and FARC meetings, indicate at least an attempt at greater cooperation. Indications are that M-19 may have been instrumental in arranging the June meeting between the MIR and FARC, and also may have cooperated with Venezuelan terrorist groups in the kidnaping of a US businessman in 1976.

Terrorist Threat Assessed

~~(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN)~~ A significant terrorist threat exists in Colombia. Although this threat is directed primarily toward Colombian officials and businessmen, US citizens have been affected. Colombia is one of two countries where terrorist groups are holding US personnel. The other is Venezuela. While all Colombian terrorist groups are capable of attacking US citizens, the M-19 is the most dangerous, having a distinct anti-US bias and being devoted to destroying "Yankee Imperialism."

~~(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN)~~ The terrorist threat in Colombia will increase even more if the terrorist groups achieve greater cooperation and unity of effort. While greater cooperation will increase the burden on the government to counter the terrorist efforts, external support of the terrorist groups -- particularly from the JCR -- could pose a major threat to the government's stability. With the 1978 elections approaching, the terrorist groups may be more receptive to greater cooperation and support to maximize the pressure on the government.

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OUTLOOK

~~(S/NOFORN)~~ Terrorist activity in Argentina, Colombia, and Venezuela will continue. The extent and effectiveness of the terrorist activity will be influenced by the degree of cooperation among the terrorist groups and the external support they receive, particularly support from the Revolutionary Coordinating Junta (JCR). While cooperation among terrorist groups -- particularly in Colombia -- has not been extensive in the past, the JCR could provide the focal point for a greater unity of effort in the future.

~~(S/NOFORN)~~ The Montoneros will continue to be the main terrorist threat in Argentina, conducting low-risk operations against unprotected targets. Argentine officials and businessmen will be the most likely targets; however, US citizens may be chosen as the terrorists continue to decentralize operations. The increased sophistication and capability to employ coded, remote-controlled bombs will remain a serious threat. The Montoneros are expected to increase propaganda and political action to broaden their base of support. The World Cup Football (soccer) Games, to be held in Argentina next June, will provide an excellent opportunity for a spectacular terrorist incident or a major propaganda effort to gain international publicity.

~~(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)~~ In Colombia, the guerrilla and terrorist organizations will remain a significant threat, and the urban terrorist units will pose the greatest challenge to the government. Terrorist activity is expected to increase with the approaching 1978 election. The terrorists will direct their efforts mainly toward weakening and discrediting the Colombian Government. Colombian officials and businessmen will continue to be the most likely targets; however, US personnel could also be included. Increased JCR involvement in Colombia is a distinct possibility because in recent years the conditions in Colombia have been more favorable for a sustained terrorist campaign than in any other South American country.

~~(S/WNINTEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)~~ Although the two most active Venezuelan guerrilla and terrorist groups -- the

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BR and BR/ML -- are concentrating on rural guerrilla operations, some increase in urban terrorist activity is expected to coincide with the 1978 election campaign. No major urban terrorist campaign is likely, unless extensive external support is provided. The greatest terrorist threat to Venezuela comes from the Cuban exile groups. While this threat is mainly directed against Venezuelan or Cuban interests, it could also be aimed at US citizens and installations in Venezuela. ~~(XGDS 2 Declassify upon notification by the originator)~~

PREPARED BY: Maj B. Greisen, USMC, RSS-1

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